(b) Does not arise.

(c) Hoolock gibbon is in Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and hence has been provided highest degree of protection under law. Further, the steps taken for conservation of wildlife, including Hoolock gibbon, in the country include:

1. Crucial habitats of various species of wild animals and birds have been notified as National Parks and Sanctuaries.

2. Financial assistance is provided to State Governments for effective management of National Parks and Sanctuaries. There is provision of earmarked funds for North-eastern States where Hoolock gibbon is found.

3. Regular patrolling of the area is done to control poaching and illegal trade in wild animals and their products. Cooperation of other enforcement agencies and international organisations is also taken in this regard.

4. Management of the wildlife habitats is done on scientific lines for betterment of wildlife.

5. Scientific research for monitoring population status of various species and evolving strategies for *in-situ* and *ex-situ* conservation of various species.

6. Creation of awareness about the importance of Wildlife conservation.

7. National Wildlife Action Plan, 2002-16 and Wildlife Conservation Strategy 2002 have been adopted in January 2002.

Eco-Strips Along Irrigation Canal in Karnataka

2407. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Karnataka Government had sent any project to develop eco-strips along its 1.2 lakh km. irrigation canal network;

(b) if so, what is the estimated cost of the above project;

(c) whether Government have given approval to the above project; and

(d) whether Government have agreed to provide funds for implementation of the project?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) Ministry of Environment and Forests has not received any such proposal from the State Forest Department.

National Forest Commission

2408. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to constitute a National Forest Commission, in the near future;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the tasks proposed to be assigned to the Commission; and

(c) by when the commission is likely to be put in place?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir. The Government have decided to constitute a National Forest Commission to look into the restructuring, reform and strengthening the entire forest set up and affiliated institutions in the country.

(b) The terms of reference of the Commission are:

(i) Review and assess the existing policy and legal framework and their impact in a holistic manner from the ecological, economic, scientific, economic social and cultural view point.

(ii) Examine the current status of forest administration and the forestry institutions both at all India and State level to meet the emerging needs of the civil society.

(iii) Make recommendations indicating specific policy options for achieving sustainable forest and wildlife management and development, bio-diversity conservation and ecological security.

(iv) Suggest ways and means to make forest administration more